

Magazine Feature Section

MUNICIPAL ARBITRATION NEW MOVEMENT TO SETTLE STRIKES

Mayor Thompson of Chicago and Father Dempsey of St. Louis Set Examples to Be Followed In Other Cities When Labor Disturbances Arise—The Ultimate Success of This Plan of Mediation Is to Have the Arbiters Absolutely Disinterested Parties—The Marvelous Work of Two Really Big Men

Municipal arbitration is the latest and most efficient way of settling labor troubles, as has been proved not only here but in many other cities.

The new system depends solely for its success upon the power and disinterestedness of the arbitrators themselves, and when these men are powerful and disinterested their mission can but be crowned with success.

In the past boards of arbitration—especially those in mine troubles—were made up of an equal number of representatives of both sides of the question and the majority of members were attorneys. They were gathered there with the object of obtaining concessions from the other side and not yielding one point in the other's favor.

It is manifest that neither side would ever reach a definite agreement if they depended solely upon their own deliberations. It remained for the strikers to either win by violence or be subdued before the board of arbitration could agree upon anything.

DISINTERESTED PARTIES.

But with the advent of disinterested and public-spirited arbitrators the matter of settling labor difficulties has been dispatched in short order. First in Chicago Mayor Thompson, a few days after taking the oath of administration, set out to settle the carpenters' strike that had been going on for more than five months. He brought both sides to him and told them how they were hampering the progress of the city and insisted that they settle their disputes so that the building industries might continue their work. In a few days he had reached a satisfactory agreement and the carpenters went back to their neglected work. Within two weeks he settled two more strikes, restoring peace in the city and bringing thousands of men back to steady employment.

From St. Louis, Mo., we have the report of a priest settling a teamsters' strike and his example is such that it has been received with praise throughout the country, and a movement to form a municipal board of arbitration.

The priest is Father Tim Dempsey, pastor of a church in the Ghetto of St. Louis. He is a big man like Mayor Thompson—more than six feet tall, and in such crisis it takes a big man with great determination to restore peace.

In St. Louis the teamsters and draymen struck for shorter hours and better wages. The transfer companies informed them that they would receive no increase in pay. So a strike was declared and riots started. United States mail wagons, guarded by police, were stoned on their way to and from their stables. The strikers dared not stone the wagons while they were in the actual delivery of mail—first because it is a penitentiary offense that the government is quick to punish with from three to five years in prison when its mail delivery is interfered with, and second because United States deputy marshals and Postoffice inspectors rode in automobiles behind the mail wagons, ready to shoot down anyone who attempted interference.

Nevertheless, the drayage traffic of the entire city was tied up and the strike assumed a serious aspect. Mayor Kiel of St. Louis said he would be glad to act as an arbiter if

he were invited to do so by both sides.

Neither side was disposed to arbitrate and the strike might have been on until this day if Father Tim, better known as "Father Tim," had not stepped in.

BIG MAN STEPS IN.

Now Father Tim is a very outspoken man. He speaks a brogue but every word is backed up by more than six feet of muscle, a broad chest and a broad back. When one speaks to this Irish priest he has to look up into the air to see him, no matter how tall he is.

Mr. Duggan of the teamster's union got a call over the telephone on the second day of the strike.

"This is Father Dempsey, Jim," said the priest.

"Ah, hello, Father Tim."

"Jim, I see by the papers that you and the byes are out."

"Yes, father."

"Well, Jim, we got to fix this thing up some how or the other. And do ye mind if I take a little hand in it and see what I can do?"

"No, father, we're always glad to have your help."

A few minutes later the millionaire president of the transfer company that wouldn't pay increased wages got a 'phone call.

"This is Father Tim Dempsey."

"Who?" politely asked the president.

"Father Tim Dempsey," bellowed the priest, "and ye needn't pretend ye don't know me, for I knew your father when he lived over here in Kerry Patch when min didn't ride around in automobiles, either."

The millionaire apologized and finally consented to a meeting with Father Tim and the strikers.

The arbitrators under the priest's direction were in deliberation for eight hours until 2 a. m., Sunday morning when Father Tim opened the door and told reporters it had been "settled" and the "byes" would be back to work Monday morning.

And there they were back at their jobs Monday morning with increased wages and shorter hours. They had lost but a half day's work, while if this genial and big-souled priest had

not stepped in the strike would have lasted several months with the loss of perhaps a million dollars and perhaps with the loss of life.

THE MOVING SPIRIT.

Talking of his power of settling the strike and why he offered to aid in the matter Father Tim said: "I once saw a striker killed in front of my church and I didn't want to see it happen again."

And Father Tim's church at that time was in the heart of the old Kerry Patch in St. Louis where men fought and hurled bricks like some Irish are credited with doing. In fact they had the old-fashioned St. Patrick Day parade in those days when the next morning the police court was jammed with sons of Erin with blackened eyes while the "other man" was in the hospital.

Recalling St. Patrick's Day parades and illustrating what a powerful man Father Dempsey is, the following story is told of him in St. Louis: On a St. Patrick's Day not many years ago the children of Father Tim's parish were giving a pa-

rade. The priest rode in a carriage with other dignitaries.

Passing a saloon some drunken hoodlums on the sidewalk shouted insults at the children and waved a can of beer at them. Father Tim didn't wait to open the door of the carriage. He jumped right through the window, chased the hoodlums, captured one and beat him in the good old-fashioned Irish way that requires the services of a physician afterwards.

Father Tim has quite frequently demonstrated that a priest must take care of the spiritual welfare of his parish from the altar and of the physical welfare on the street, and often with his fists.

One day Father Tim was in the sanctuary of his church reading his prayers when he heard a noise out in the church. He saw a man stealthily go up the aisle, break open the poor box and take the few pennies. The priest (who incidentally is an athlete and a runner) was after him in a minute. He overtook the man after several blocks' chase, downed him and gave him what the

Irish call a "good drubbin'" before he turned him over to the police.

While this illustrates the physical strength of this priest, it must be understood that his heart is commensurate in size and generosity with his size. Father Tim loves mankind and never a homeless wanderer has appealed to him in vain. Furthermore never has a tramp gone to the "Potter's Field." Father Tim has a private burial ground in part of a big cemetery in which he buries his wards.

HAS WORKINGMAN'S HOTEL.

His workingmen's hotel has won him fame all over the United States, but even before he established this haven for the poor and homeless he was out working for his "byes." He also conducts a day nursery for the mothers of poor children.

Anyone who saw Father Tim on his daily rounds of duty would be forced to admire him. The first thing after mass and breakfast he visits the Carr street station, which is in the heart of the Ghetto of St. Louis.

SCENE AT STRIKE OF TEAMSTERS

"Good morning, Sargeant Fitzgerald," said the priest.

"Good morning, your rlvinnce," replied the desk sergeant.

"And which one of my poor byes have ye today," he would demand.

The desk sergeant after a perusal of his list of prisoners remarked: "Paddy O'Rourke, drunk on the street."

"Ah, poor Paddy," would remark the priest. "And ye know, sargeant, Paddy is a fine bye—one of the best in the world only once in awhile he gets a wee drop too much. Poor Paddy."

After a few minutes of persuasion one might see Paddy, his hair and clothes dishevelled and his eyes still bleary from alcohol, walking down the street with the priest's big hand grasping him by the arm and kind words of monition flowing from Father Tim's lips.

For such men as these Father Dempsey established his workingmen's hotel and gave every assistance to them. Now his views on sociology are different and yet more substantial than those held by most men. He knows for instance, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred that his kindness is going to be repaid with ingratitude and thus being prepared suffers none of the mental anguish that another might under the circumstances.

He knows also that a man that gets drunk once will more than likely get drunk again and that no number of pledges or promises given by that man will save him.

So when he gets one of the men out of the police station he is reasonably certain that that man will be back again in the course of a week or two and on his next visit will land in the workhouse. Even his experience there will not prevent him from getting drunk and so between times in jail or in the workhouse Father Dempsey boards and feeds him and tries to get him to work. The priest realizes that his only hope lies in the man reforming himself, and in this connection a good "bawling out" or even a "punch" will bring a man more quickly to a realization of his duties than all the prayers and pleas in the world and maybe you don't know that many a wife-beater has changed his tactics after feeling the heavy hand of the fighting Irish priest upon him.

So this is the type of man that settles strikes in one day without loss to owners or to the laborers themselves. It takes a big, dominant man who can force his own terms on either side that appears obstinate, to do such a thing, but Father Tim and Mayor Thompson of Chicago are types of men that are doing it, and it is becoming a success to be copied in other cities.



REV. FATHER DEMPSEY, HIS ASSISTANTS AND THE NURSERY CHARGES